

Shelter Setup and Operation

Presented by the
NC Department of Crime Control & Public Safety
Division of Emergency Management
and the
NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
Emergency Programs Division

Shelter Setup & Operation

- Shelter staff and training
- Areas of shelter
- Special sheltering considerations
- Animal handling and safety

Shelter Planning

Planning Considerations:

- Check in Order
 - People first (avoid drop-offs)
- Shelter security: animals and people
- Communication Plan
- Transitions: Evacuation to Rescue to Adoption
 - ex. Use registration area for future adoption/fostering if animals abandoned

In an evacuation shelter you should only be housing the pets of the individuals who are staying at the human shelter. People should check in at the human shelter first and then bring you their animals. If you allow them to drop off their animal first you will be caring for a larger number of animals than necessary and you may NEVER see that person again and you will have to deal with abandoned animal issues.

Consider shelter security concerns in selecting location for registration and determining the flow of animals and people. The facility should prevent both animals from escaping and unwanted visitors. Unfortunately animals have been stolen after disasters and you want to keep this from happening. It is also likely that an animal will get away from a handler and you need to plan for this. Double fencing with secure entrance/exit is the best option.

Need a Communication Plan to address communication challenges between the registration location and other areas of the shelter. Radios are helpful to call for help, answer questions etc. All staff should have a whistle and understand the rules associated with use of the whistle (animal has escaped or other SOS message—when you hear a whistle secure the animal you are working with and render assistance.)

CAMET Does Not Include

- Perishable materials (such as food)
- Fuel for generator
- Medical supplies
- Medications
- Staff



The basic CAMET does not include perishable materials, medical supplies, medications, people/shelter staff or fuel for the generator. Your plan should include how you will obtain these supplies in the event of a disaster.

Treatment services or facilities must be addressed separately. (i.e. vaccinations, micro chipping, flea/tick treatment). An evacuation shelter may not need full service treatment but you should have a plan in place for how to address issues as they arise.

Shelter Staffing Sources

- County Animal Response Team (CART)
- Animal Control should be the lead agency
- County extension agents may help support
- Local Veterinarian (volunteer/contract)
- Veterinary Response Corps



This and the next slide show the different roles CART members can play in CAMET Deployments.

Animal Control should be the lead agency in most counties since they shelter animals every day of the year.

Cooperative Extension agents are great sources of information. CES agents have numerous contacts in the community and are especially knowledgeable with large animals and non-traditional pets such as chickens, emus, etc. that may need to be sheltered in a rescue type operation.

Veterinary Response Corps are volunteer veterinarians and veterinary technicians. Most will have training with the CAMET and run "shelters" everyday at their hospitals.

Shelter Support Staff

- Animal owners
- Local humane groups
- Veterinary clinics
- Grooming facilities
- Other local resources



Other people in your community that can be used to help for sheltering animals.

Staff Positions

- See Shelter Event Staffing module for more specific information
- Shelter manager (Oversight)
- Animal Case Manager (Registration)
- Animal Handling Specialist
- Volunteers for set up/demob

The basic roles you need to consider are who has oversight of the shelter, who will manage animal issues, who is trained to handle animals, and who will do the set-up, cleaning, demobilization and other non-animal contact needs?

Recommended Training

Shelter management training & credentials:

- County-specific shelter training
 - Basic biosecurity and county EOP
- Incident Command System (ICS) 100
- ICS 200
- NIMS 700
- Biosecurity awareness
- HazMat awareness
- State/County EOP

Recommended training/credentials for shelter management:

- Yellow = minimum training needed for shelter management
- SART/VRC credentialed staff have completed all of the items listed

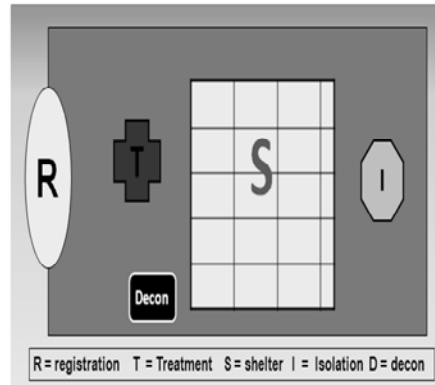
Each county is responsible for developing their own plan for animal response. Shelter managers should receive this county specific training prior to opening a shelter.

The NC Animal Disaster Sheltering Resources website (www.ncagr.gov/oep/Sheltering) can provide template documents to help your county begin the planning process.

The NCDA&CS Emergency Programs Division will provide animal sheltering guidance but cannot develop specific county trainings because each county has unique issues that need to be addressed locally.

Areas of the Shelter

1. Registration
2. Treatment
3. Decontamination
4. Shelter Area
5. Isolation
6. Exercise Area/Room



Depending on the type of shelter you set up (may be rescue or non-owned animals), there are certain functional areas that may be needed.

More information on the areas of a shelter can be found in the module on Shelter Event management and staffing.

Registration Location

- Separate from shelter area if possible
 - Consider locating registration outside
- Provide exercise/restroom area for animals waiting
- Triage animals to determine acceptance and placement
 - Do they need Decon or medical care?
 - Is this animal acceptable for sheltering?

Consider locating the registration area outside if the situation and weather allows.

If registration is located inside, consider triaging pets outside to minimize exposure of healthy vs. contagious/young animals

Need to provide an exercise area for the animals who are waiting to be registered.

Triage should include: Determine if animal is in immediate need of medical care. If not immediate, does it need to be seen by your veterinarian-when and why? Does the animal need to be decontaminated (flea/tick bath, flood crud, hazardous material exposure?)

Determine if animal is acceptable for sheltering-do you have a policy against that species or breed? Is the animal aggressive or contagious or otherwise a danger to humans or other animals. Do you have the facilities to house this pet? Does the animal or owner have special needs that need to be recorded and keep track of?

Registration Process

- Use numbering system to call people to registration table
 - maintain order and minimize animal contact
- Need to track all animals
- Require identification
 - Owner's ID, microchips, picture of pet & owner



Call owners and pets to the registration table using a numbering system. This helps maintain an orderly process and minimizes contact between animals.

The shelter must provide a method to track all animals in the shelter. You also need a method to ensure that the animal is release to the right person.

Registration Information

- Explain “rules” of shelter:
 - Animal care
 - Visitation
 - Dismissal policies



Use the registration process as an opportunity to educate pet owners on the shelter’s rules, policies, and procedures. Owners that do not follow these rules risk having their animal dismissed from the shelter—people need to know up front what will be expected of them. They also need to understand that if THEY get dismissed from the human shelter they will have to take their animal with them.

Treatment Area

- Optional area
 - Evacuation shelters- probably not
- Anticipating injured or sick animals
 - Basic wound treatment
 - Transfer to clinic if seriously injured or sick
- Microchips
- Vaccination

1. May not be needed if owner's are present with healthy animals
2. Limit personnel in this area to those who have a professional reason to be there.
3. If sheltering during flea/tick season consider tasking/referring to veterinarian or non-governmental organization (NGO) for preventively treating all pets
4. If shelter is a rescue type facility collocated with NGO or veterinary facility, you could microchip, vaccinate, and treating wounds in this area

Decontamination

- Optional area
- Possible location for flea/tick baths
- Consider type of disaster when setting up this area
 - Flood Crud
 - Chemical spills
 - Others
- PPE: hand, eye, splash protection



1. This area is also optional and may not be needed for an evacuation area.
2. If animals have external parasites then setting up a bathing area is a good idea.
3. Considering the type of disaster will help determine if you need decontamination and what type. Have the animals been exposed to flood waters or hazardous materials—you'll need to bath them if this is the case. Dawn dishwashing detergent is a good cleaning agent that cuts grease and is relatively safe for most animals.
4. Staff working in this area will need to consider how best to protect themselves from both the animals and what you are trying to get off the animals.

Shelter Area - Animals

- Identification on each cage
- Healthy pets only
 - Nothing contagious
- Fully vaccinated animals
 - Isolate very young



1. Identification cards (with or without picture) should be placed on each cage (or near cage if animal might chew on it, -watch for these special cases and find an alternative solution). The point is to keep all animals properly identified.
2. Animals should have a 'permanent' location in the shelter. Clean the dog cage while the dog is being exercised, place the cat in a travel carrier if cat cage needs to be cleaned. Animals should be returned to the SAME cage to avoid confusion and exposure to asymptomatic diseases.
3. Healthy pets only in shelter area
4. Contagious pets (those with diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, sneezing etc.) or the young, not fully vaccinated pets should be kept isolated from the healthy population

Shelter Area

- Limit people
 - Approved shelter volunteers
 - Designated animal owners/caregivers
- Accessible supplies
 - Paper towels
 - Cleaning agents
 - Newspapers
 - Lidded trashcans with liners



The shelter is not entertainment or a petting zoo. Only approved shelter volunteers and designated caregivers who have a reason to be there should be allowed.

Supplies that should be kept handy in this location are paper towels and cleaning agents. Fresh newspapers and bedding. Trashcans with lids and liners (and replacement liners).

Isolation Area

- Temporary holding area
- Establish under veterinary supervision
- Transfer animals ASAP:
 - injured/ill animals to veterinary hospital
 - biting animals to animal control facility

An isolation area should be established for emergency situations. Any animal suspected of having something contagious should be placed in this area and then transferred to an appropriate facility. Signs/symptoms that would warrant temporary isolation include respiratory illness, gastrointestinal signs, and skin lesions.

Veterinary personnel who are familiar with disease transmission should establish this area and an appropriate protocols for working with/around these animals.

Any animal that has bitten someone will need to be placed on a secure 10 day hold to prevent additional biting and to observe for signs consistent with rabies. The bite will need to be reported and county animal control should establish appropriate isolation of that animal.

Exercise Area/Room

- Outside - fenced area
- Inside - separate room
- Keep well marked (cones work well)
- Accessible supplies
 - Plastic bags
 - Pooper scoopers (not in all CAMETs)
 - Waste container

•The dogs will need an area established for exercise and elimination. The area should be well marked and secure. Owner will be walking their own animals—your shelter policies should establish how many animals can be exercised at once—many shelters only allow one animal at a time to prevent altercations.

•Owners should clean up after their animals—keeping supplies well stocked will help to ensure they do this.

Shelter Preparation (1)

- Line floors and walls with plastic
- 3 feet above tops of cages
- Cover everything
- Use painter's tape to attach plastic



Cover lockers or any other permanent furniture/structure with heavy plastic (provided in CAMET) to minimize necessary clean-up and decontamination. The plastic should be placed at least 3 feet above the tops of cages.

Painter's tape (masking tape) works well to attach plastic to walls, furniture, and other structures. Painter's tape is preferred so that you don't pull the paint off the walls.

Shelter Preparation (2)

- Use something to increase traction
- Good coverage with plastic will minimize clean-up later



For safety reasons you need to consider using something over the plastic for traction. Rubber runner mats are not provided on the CAMETs but are the best option. Some CAMETs have a roll of carpet for the runner. If you don't have a rubber mat or carpet you could use cardboard boxes or towels-anything to help absorb fluids and keep people from slipping.

Cage Set-Up

- Pull up on center section
- Pull sides up and hook them to the top
- Leave at least 6 inches between cages
 - Cleaning
 - Animal separation



The CAMETs come equipped with cages. Some have large only, others have both large and medium. The pictures demonstrate the type of cages that are included. They are a basic wire cage that is easy to assemble and store. The cages may have a divider-please do not use this divider.

Only ONE animal per cage-this will cut down on cage fighting and limit the spread of disease. Owners may insist their animals need to be kept together but remember that animals act differently in shelters than at home, your safest course of action is to let each individual animal have it's own space. Keep the cages at least 6 inches apart. If an animal is uncomfortable seeing other animals you can place cardboard boxes between the cages.

Don't stack these type cages. Waste and infectious materials can fall down into the bottom cage.

Sheltering Cats

- Separate from dogs if possible
- Accessible Supplies
 - Towels
 - Litter/newspaper
 - Bedding
 - Boxes for hiding



Emergency Sheltering is a very stressful for most cats. If possible keep them in a separate area. They will be much calmer and easier to handle if they aren't beside barking dogs. It's also better for the dogs, the dogs will bark a lot anyway but will be much more agitated if they can see the cats.

The medium size cages are appropriate for individual cat housing (and Queens with litters). There is room for a small litter tray-use NON clumping litter or newspaper. The clumping litter will stick to the cat if it gets wet and will cause a huge mess and an upset cat. Towels or small boxes can be used for hiding.

Sheltering Pocket Pets (1)

- Small pets such as rodents
- Covered under PETS act
- House in small room if available



Things to note: It is best to use shredded newspaper or towels as bedding. You may receive donations of wood chips, sawdust, corn cobs—avoid using these substances to bed pocket pets because they can lead to a variety of problems. Housing needs to be escape proof, most of these pets are very good at getting out. Hopefully owner brought appropriate housing with them—you may need to improvise.

Diarrhea in any of these animals can be dangerous! Report to your veterinarian immediately.

Picture from poiratsandcats.blogspot.com/2008_04_01_archiv...

Sheltering Pocket Pets (2)

- Should arrive in own container
 - May need to improvise
- Each species has own special needs
 - Ask owner if you don't know



Cat food can be feed for a day or two but ultimately these animals have special dietary needs that are best met with a commercially produced pellet diet designed for the species. Keep in mind that cats are carnivores and most pocket pets are vegetarians!

Ferrets are strict carnivores and can be feed kitten food as a stable diet. Most other mammalian pocket pets are vegetarians.

Each species has it's only special needs. The owner should be aware of these needs-if you don't know ask the owner but DO NOT make it up. Guinea pigs need vitamin C, rabbits and rodents need extra fiber, hamster/gerbils need to chew. Don't scruff chinchillas-can cause skin slip.

Picture from <http://hem.passagen.se/greencream99/food.htm>.

Sheltering Birds

- Use separate area
 - Shower or dressing room
- Towels to cover cages
- Prevent drafts



Birds need to be kept in a quiet, draft free area. Towels and sheets are needed to place over the cages to calm the birds and allow them to rest.

Sheltering Other Animals

- Communicate clearly which species will and will not be accepted at your shelter
 - Have a Plan B for these animals
- No poisonous or dangerous animals should be accepted
- Reptiles
 - Many people have as pets
 - Secure housing can be a challenge

Plan B—Is there another facility that can house big dogs or animals with special circumstances? Poisonous or dangerous animals are too much of a risk to human health and should not be housed at your shelter.

Reptiles: Volunteers or other animal owners may have an extreme phobia of these animals. If your shelter WILL take these pets then keep in mind that they are very good at escaping and need to be housed in secure areas. Larger snakes can be dangerous to cats and pocket pets so should be housed in a separate area.

Safety Precautions

- Wear closed toe/ sturdy shoes
- Wear gloves at all times
- Wash hands frequently
- Protect your back from injury by proper lifting techniques, etc.

Both volunteers and animal owners/caregivers need to wear closed-toed shoes. This is both for sanitation and safety—flip flops are not acceptable foot wear in a shelter. Gloves should be worn and changed between animals. Wash hands with soap and water—hand sanitizers cannot penetrate visible contamination. Prevent physical injuries and trauma.

Restraint Equipment

- Leashes/Halters
- Twitches
- Leather gloves
- Muzzles

Some of this equipment is not provided on the basic CAMET. May want to consider keeping this equipment on hand.

Sick Animals

- More likely to be aggressive
- Extra protective equipment may be warranted
 - Mask
 - Eye protection
 - Other

Sick animals are risky for a variety of reasons. They may be contagious to other animals or possibly even to people (ringworm, mange, giardia, etc...). Sick animals are also more likely to be aggressive. Wear protective equipment if needed.

Animal Handling Safety

- Always be alert, animals are unpredictable
- Common causes of animal handling accidents:
 - Fearful/agitated animals
 - Maternal aggression
 - Male dominance aggression
 - Territorial aggression

Stay alert. Emergency Shelters are very stressful environments and animals are unpredictable. Accidents happen quickly but may be avoided if people take pre-cautions. Aggression and fear are the primary cause of accidents.

Basics of Handling

- Animals may be stressed from travel, being away from their owners, etc.
- Use restraint devices when needed
- Read the animal's body language
- No loud noises or sudden movement

Things that make the situation stressful for animals are: travel, new environment, away from owner, noise, lights, smells, and people that are all unfamiliar.

Be safe—if you think you might need to use a restraint device than USE it. Take a moment to 'read' the animals signs and move slowly and calmly.

General Animal Handling

- Do not 'trust' animals you don't know
- Remember to speak softly and evenly
- Animals do NOT respond to or understand anger
- Humane handling of all animals is of utmost importance!

Never trust animals you don't know. A calm, friendly animal may even turn on its owner in a stressful environment. Always speak softly and evenly-excitement on your part is likely to agitate the animal. Anger has no benefit in this situation and the animals must always be handled humanely.

Small Animal Handling

- Dogs
 - Keep dogs leashed at all times when they are out of their run/cage
- Cats
 - Keep cats in their cage/carrier at all times, only remove for cage cleaning, etc
 - Immediately place in holding cage
 - Use proper holding technique

Dogs must be leashed when out of their enclosures. This is a point that will need to be stressed to all owners and caregivers!

In a shelter situation, cats that are not in a cage or carrier need to be 'scruffed'. This is humane and proper handling and is actually calming for most cats. Cats (even friendly ones) can be easily startled in a strange environment and can cause injuries and 'escape'. Cat scratches and bites can be very bad and need medical attention. Getting cats out of the ceiling can be challenging and time consuming and if they get outside they can be gone forever!

S.A. Body Language

- Eyes on you or look away
- Flattened/pinned ears
- Defense stance
- Standing low to the ground
- Tucked tail
- Raised fur
- Twitching tail (cats)
- Bared teeth

See handout for additional information on canine and feline body language. Most animals give warning signals that you should be aware of. Learn the signs that an animal is stressed, fearful or aggressive.

Large Animals (L.A.)

- May be stressed from traveling, separation, strange lights/sounds, etc.
- Read the animals body language
- No loud noises
- Move slowly and carefully
- Use restraint devices when necessary
- Have someone help you

We've mostly talked about small animals today but you may also need to shelter large animals. If you do then you also need to learn about behavior in these animals too. These animals are even more likely to become stressed in strange environments. Read their body language, avoid loud noises and sudden movements. Always work in pairs and use restraint equipment if needed.

Large Animal Handling (1)

- Do not approach an equine from behind
- Approach animals from the front and avoid “blind spots”/ “kick zones”
- Always lead a horse from the left side
- Do not back them into a corner
- Keep herd animals in small groups if possible

We don't have time today to cover all of the things you need to know to handle large animal but there are a couple of really important points everyone should know.

1. Never approach a horse from behind, avoid blind spots (directly behind and directly in front) and stay out of the kick zones.
2. Lead a horse from the left side only, very few horses have been trained on both sides.
3. Do not back them into a corner, a frightened animal will take the path of least resistance—don't let that be over top of YOU! Always remember that they are bigger, stronger and faster than you—you have to be smarter by making them comfortable.
4. Herd animals like to be in a HERD so keep them in small groups if possible. Having other animals of the same species near by will make them feel more comfortable and allow them to relax.

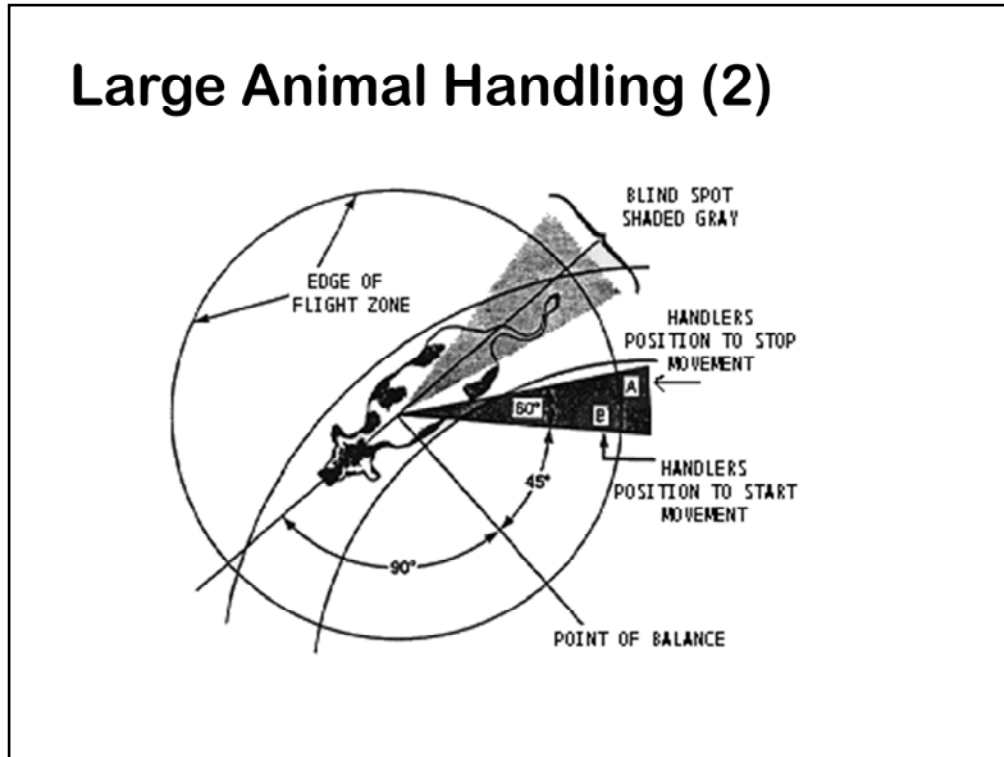
L.A. Body Language

- Eyes rolled back
- Pinned ears
- Alert and holding head high
- Lifted leg (any of them)
- “Pawing the ground”

Signs that a horse may harm you—eyes rolled back so whites are visible, ears pinned down to the head, head held high and paying attention to you, lifted leg (preparing to strike—can do this with front or back legs) and pawing the ground.

See the handout for more information.

Large Animal Handling (2)

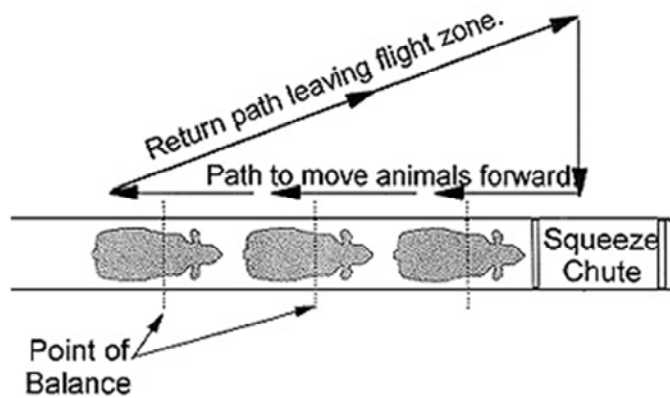


This slide demonstrated the flight zone of a cow. The large circle around the cow represents that particular animal's comfort zone. If you enter this zone the animal is going to move away—you've entered the space the animal considers to be its own. The animal will become uncomfortable and possibly dangerous when you enter this area. Distance is not given because it can vary by individual animal. A show cow may not have a flight zone and you might be able to walk right up to it. A pasture animal may have a very LARGE zone—watch when approaching, the animal will tell you when you are approaching its personal space.

To move cattle you utilize this zone. Entering the flight zone in front of the point of balance will cause the animal to move backwards. Approaching from behind the point of balance will cause the animal to move forwards. They are choosing the best path to get AWAY from you—use this to your advantage to get them where you want them.

The shaded area is the blind spot—the animal cannot see you. If you approach through the blind spot and move you will appear suddenly to the animal and are more likely to get kicked.

Large Animal Handling (3)



If you are lucky enough to have a chute make sure you have someone around who knows how to use it. There are lots of handles, bars and doors that can cause injuries. Animals in these chutes cannot move backwards-only forwards when the path is clear. To move them walk straight down the side-their goal is STILL to get away from YOU. Don't approach from the back, this will startle them and may cause a pile-up in the chute. You still need to be careful in the kick zone. The chute may appear secure but rotting wood can give way.

Conclusion

- Identify and train shelter staff
- Thoughtfully establish shelter areas
- Determine animals your shelter will accept
- Communicate shelter policies and procedures to animal owners
- Use proper animal handling methods